

Strategies for Active Reading

"Good readers use seven comprehension strategies: 1. Making connections to prior knowledge, 2. Drawing inferences and predicting, 3. Asking questions, 4. Determining what is important, 5. Visualizing the content, 6. Synthesizing and retelling, 7. Monitoring and using appropriate fix-up strategies to repair reading. Good readers also use multiple strategies automatically and simultaneously... before, during and after reading." - *Power Tools for Adolescent Literacy 2009*

Try the following techniques to help you apply the seven comprehension strategies:

- **Apply prior knowledge:** Understand you bring with you knowledge about the topics and situations presented in the text. Keep trying to connect your background knowledge and personal experiences with what is happening in the text.
- **Identify with the major characters:** When you can connect with the narrator and the other characters, it makes the tasks of remembering, understanding, and analyzing the text much easier. Imagine yourself in the story; how would you react if you were in the same situation? How are the characters' experiences and attitudes like yours?
- **Make predictions:** Keep thinking about what might happen next; think about what would make sense as a sequence of events. Check your predictions against what actually happens at the end of each chapter or section.
- **Use problem solving strategies:** Re-read a confusing sentence or passage if you lose track of what is happening. Be realistic; are you lost because you are distracted? Tired? If not, it's probably the language that is the issue. Use the other words in the sentence/passage as clues to help you figure out the meaning of the unfamiliar words. Don't be lazy; look up difficult vocabulary words if you know your understanding of a passage hinges on that word(s). If you still have questions or are unclear about the meaning, ASK QUESTIONS IN CLASS!
- **Jot down summaries:** If you find you are completing the reading for homework, but still having trouble remembering what you read the next day, keep a packet of post-it notes with you as you read. Every few pages, or at the end of each chapter or reading assignment, jot down a summary of what just happened. Include references to the major characters and conflicts that took place in that section of the book. Place the post-it in the book at the end of the passage, and review it the next day before class, or before the next quiz, and especially before you begin reading the next passage in the novel, so you know where the story left off.